

The Family

THE WOMAN'S THANKS.

There is so much strong men are thankful for—

A nation's progress, or a slow strife's end;

And though I join my praise with theirs today,

Grave things as these I scarce can comprehend,

So vast are they;

And so, apart, dear God, I pray Thee, take

My thanks for these Thy little blessings' sake.

The little common joys of every day—
My garden blowing in an April wind,
A linnet's greeting and the morning fall
Of happy sunshine through the opened blind.

The poplars tall

That guard my threshold, and the peace that falls,

Like Sabbath stillness, from my humble walls.

The little simple joys that we forget
Until we lose them; for the lamp that lights

The pages of the books I love the best,
The hearth's red welcoming on winter nights,

The kindly jest

That moves within its circle, and the near

Companionship of those the heart holds dear.

The dear, accustomed joys we lightly take

Too much for granted sometimes, as a child

His father's gifts; and, so remembering,
For these thanks, for these my treasures piled,

Each simple thing

Those wiser may forget, dear Father, take

My thanks for these Thy little blessings' sake.

—Theodosia Garrison, in Harper's Bazar.

GUNS AND FEATHER BEDS.

Mistress Dent stood shielding her eyes with her plump hand from the brilliant sunshine, that fretful morning of the 19th of April, 1775. Paul Revere had passed her house at dawn, calling upon the inmates to arise, as the British were coming in force to seize the arms and stores of the village of Concord, and every man, woman and child was deeply stirred.

The home of the Dents was on the direct road from the hill over which the British would march into the village, and a large store of guns lay piled upon the broad back porch—awaiting the return of the men to convey them to a place of safety.

"Do you see them, mother?" asked Dorothy Dent, anxiously. "What shall we do if they come before father and my brothers return?"

"No, they are not yet in sight, child. I wish they were not here—the arms, I mean. They are so sorely needed, and they would fall but an easy prey to the British, with none but women to defend them."

"If there were only some safe hiding-place," sighed Dorothy, "I would carry every gun out of their reach myself!"

Grandmother Dent hobbled out to the sunny porch, a tall, keen-eyed old lady, with a strain of Quaker blood in her veins, leaving heavily on her cane. She had not yet heard the alarming news of the morning, and she looked searchingly at the anxious faces as she asked, "What is thee talking about so earnestly?"

"The British are coming, grandmother, to seize the stores, and we are trying to think of some place in which to conceal the guns," Dorothy replied in her clear young voice, which her grandmother could hear better than any other in the family.

Grandmother Dent did not believe in wars and fighting; no, no, but there was a principle within her which rebelled strongly against armed men taking by force from private premises what did not belong to them, and her eyes flashed as she pondered the situation.

"Has thee sorted the feathers in the south room feather-bed of late, daughter?" she said at length, looking at her daughter-in-law with a twinkling smile in her dark eyes. "It is sunny and still on the porch; it seemeth a proper day for such a task."

"The very thing, mother!" Dorothy clapped her hands joyfully. "The guns will never be the worse for a bit of down."

It was a very peaceful scene which greeted the eyes of the soldiery which an hour later marched down the hill.

Grandmother Dent and her daughter, their heads tied up in pillow-cases, were busily sorting a great pile of feathers heaped up on the porch, while the empty feather tick and several sacks lay on the floor. They were in full view of the company which, under the command of Captain Parsons, swept around the house to the front door, where they were met by Dorothy, who had put up her hair in its most bewitching fashion, and pinned on a kerchief which became her dimpled beauty admirably.

"We have orders to search this house, maiden, for concealed arms," said the captain, with a bow. "I trow we shall be allowed to go on with our task peaceably and with expedition."

"Certainly, sir." Dorothy courtesied with perfect grace, though her heart was beating violently with excitement. "It would be a pity to disappoint such courteous gentlemen of such harmless amusement."

"And while your men explore the secrets of ladies' bed-chambers, perhaps you will accept some refreshment," suggested Dorothy, with sacasm veiled beneath the most bewitching smile, as the men were about to go up-stairs. "Huldah, set out the fresh doughnuts and the last baking of bread, with apples for the gentlemen."

"Thanks, maiden, but we shall have no

time for feasting," replied Captain Parsons, with some reluctance, for American cookery had always proven toothsome to his British palate, and they had had a long march. "We have more serious work before us this day, and it ill behooves us to spend the time in partaking of even such charming hospitality as yours. By the way, who are those dames on the rear porch?"

"My mother and my grandmother, sir, who bade me crave your pardon that they were not at liberty to receive you. The day was fine, and the feathers have long needed sorting. It is a very important part of housewifery. Would it please you to observe how it is done?" and Dorothy made as if she would open the door which opened on the porch. "We keep the doors shut fast, that the feathers may not fly inside."

The gayly-clad officer stepped back in alarm. His uniform was new, and he had no mind to expose it to a flying cloud of down.

"I have no interest in your feather-picking!" he exclaimed hastily.

Meanwhile, Grandmother and Mistress Dent were not idle, though they sat with anxious hearts listening to the tramp of soldiers inside, and to Dorothy's clear young voice, which she purposely raised so that her mother could hear her.

She was not afraid, now that the first thrill of fear was past, only that her father or her brothers might return and meet with violence at the hands of the soldiers. Old Huldah was close at hand, and these men were gentlemen, such as she had met in Colonial society many times and she trusted her nimble tongue and stout heart to protect her.

Mistress Dent acted at once on the hint which the captain's remark gave her and the down was flying merrily when a party came around the house to search the stables and outbuildings.

"A murrain seize the feathers!" cried one of them as a handful, deftly helped along its way by grandmother's violent coughing, sailed out and fastened upon his gay coat sleeve, where he in vain endeavored to pluck it off, only succeeding in spreading it the length of his arm, and exposing himself to the gibes of his fellow-soldiers.

The soldiers marched away without discovering the secret of the precious store, and brave Dorothy watched them with a very white face and trembling hands, for it had been a severe strain upon even her healthy nerves.

No one came for the guns, for the father and his sons were defending the bridge, and with sick hearts the women heard the sounds of the firing in the distance, not knowing whether any of the loved ones would return alive. It was evening before Roger Dent and his sons returned flushed with the victory of the day and the guns were still covered with their downy disguise.

"Blessing on the geese that shed their feathers in a cause so glorious," said Dorothy's father, as he smoothed her hair tenderly, "and on the little daughter who could play the hostess to her enemies so bravely and discreetly."—Good Cheer.